Resiliency

Tyler Creasy, Andrea Curtis, Mackenzie Kelley

Loss of students and Teachers

Balance

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Emotional Quotient

**Loss of Students or Teachers**

On any given school day, there will be at least one student in a school system experiencing loss of some sort. This could stem from the loss of a family member, close friend, or loved one. A sense of loss could develop from many other factors as well, parents separation or divorce, changing schools, an illness in the family, of even imprisonment of a family member are all examples of other ways students could be experiencing loss. Experiencing loss is difficult in any situation, but when it is the loss of a student or teacher it becomes an almost unimaginable situation that must be dealt with quickly and with delicacy. When it becomes such a school wide event, then it is no longer a situation of trying to console a lone student or two on their home issues, it suddenly becomes a situation of trying to console and manage hundreds of students, staff, and faculty.

**Helping Students Cope**

        Experts have claimed that students who operate with unresolved grief begin to show strong signs of deterioration of behavior. Students may suddenly be doing poorly in school, acting out, risk taking, and even substance abusing. It is essential that schools remain active in locating and assisting problems students may be having due to loss. So when you have an entire school filled with [grieving students](http://teaching.monster.com/benefits/articles/1927-how-to-help-your-students-deal-with-grief-and-loss), how do you cope with that? One expert claims that there are [four key components](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ursus-proxy-6.ursus.maine.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=044ee7c3-9ca3-403b-a773-37a21616d67e%40sessionmgr198&vid=1&hid=108) to provide grieving children. The first suggestion is to maintain schedules and routines within the school. Having a sense of normalcy can help students cope with the sudden and intense emotions and can assist teachers in being strong and setting an example for their classes. The second is love, having the adults around to support them through words and actions. Third is honesty about the situation and grief, though this one depends on the age of the grieving child and their needs. Lastly is security. It is important for students to be able to grow through the pain and put the fear behind them. This in turn helps to build students well-being as they cope with their problems. Having a staff that can respond to loss is just as important as teaching the students their basic subjects.

[**Responding Roles**](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Crisis/crisisbook.pdf)

        When responding to a death there are [several different roles](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/neat_poland.aspx) that faculty members must take on. Once the death has been completely confirmed with no doubt as to it, the principal takes over with immediate action. The principal should be in constant contact with school administrators to make sure everyone is on the same page. They must contact the faculty and develop a plan. Together they must figure out if curriculum needs to be pushed back in order to allow grieving time, tests should be postponed, and the principal should be there for the teachers. They must then move on to notifying students and being prepared to share information on the funeral plans as well as beginning coordination on a memorial. The last job a principal must cover in such a time of crisis is the most important, they must be available. By being out in the hallways and letting students see them, they are helping to assure students that things will be all right and calming down the situation some.

The principal is not the only faculty member who must be prepared to take on some new responsibilities. The guidance counselor, caseworker, or whoever the school has in that sort of role must be prepared to empty their schedule. They must be open at all times of the school day for students coming to them to talk. These employees should set up times for counseling with students whether it is individual or with groups, they should also have the contact information for other counseling services.  Certain parents may need to be contacted depending on how their child is reacting to the situation. These workers should also ensure that they keep detailed records of who comes to them throughout the troubled period.

Teachers have possibly the most important role to play. As the primary source of interaction with students they must be prepared to answer any and all question, dispel rumors, and model a strong reaction. Teacher must ensure that student’s understand they are allowed to react, however they need to and to let their emotions out. In some cases it may be appropriate to have a class discussion about the death in order for students to let out any struggling thoughts or feelings they may contain. If discussion does not seem the appropriate route then sometimes distracting activities can also be a good idea. Mostly though, teachers should keep a sharp eye on their students to identify the ones who are truly struggling and may require more help and support.

**Suicide versus Natural**

**Picture** [**from**](http://allianceforsuicideprevention.org/about-suicide/) **Permission Pending**

Now we must consider the manner of the death. Was the student or teacher killed? Did they die of a terminal illness? Was it sudden? Was it suicide? If the death occurred to suicide, immediate action must be taken in the form of post-vention, procedures which have been laid out by the [American Association of Suicidology](http://www.suicidology.org/about-aas). The procedures are an attempt to teach students about suicide, provide support, and hopefully help to avoid a repeat action. The association encourages school administrations to not encourage students to attend the funeral, to not create memorials for them, and to not hold an assembly to honor the lost member of the community. It is important to not glamorize the person or their actions. Instead the school should focus all their efforts into talking with the students honestly, offering support, and reminding them that help and support are always available to them no matter what.

In the case of a sudden death, faculty and staff must work hard together to maintain their composure enough to help their students. The routine is the same as listed above, but the emotional and psychological impact can be greater due to no forewarning in order to prepare for that possible outcome. Regarding the funeral, schools may handle it differently. The common procedure is to allow students to be excused from school in order to attend so long as they have a note of permission from their parents or guardians. Some schools may provide buses to the funeral, but a note must still be provided. In all cases parents should be encouraged to attend the funeral with their children for an extra measure of support. If it is a teacher that passes away then schools may decide to cancel for the day of the funeral so that all faculty, staff, and students may have the opportunity to attend.

**Other Types of Loss**

        Loss can be experienced by large groups from a school even if it is not connected with the school directly. If the parent of a student passes away and several students knew the parent well or often spent time at the house of the student in question, that group and quite possibly the entire class of the student may suddenly all be experiencing varying degrees of grief. In cases such as these the school should reach out to the family to offer their support. Counseling services might set up group sessions for those closely linked to the family or even for the class in general. The school could also help the students find a productive output for their emotions as a way to do something nice for the peer and the family of the peer.

**Balance**

**Picture** [**from**](http://teenmentalhealth.org/blog/type/category/knowledge-translation) **Permission Pending**

        When balance is brought into a conversation, most people generally begin to think about centers of balance, people tripping over their own feet, or trying to balance on a thin edge. What other types of balance are there though? Balance is an important concept to be considered in schools. If students are not balanced emotionally then their work in school could decline and it could create other undesired side effects.

        More and more frequently, teachers find themselves under increasing pressure to raise performance standard, improve their teaching practices, and other similar pressures. The added weight of these things can cause some teachers to overload their students and to focus so much on the workload that they neglect their student’s well-being as well as their relationship with the students. Studies show that creating [strong bonds](http://link.springer.com.ursus-proxy-6.ursus.maine.edu/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4614-4939-3_5) with students helps them to feel reassured that they are cared about in school and they then perform better as a result. A group of students when questioned stated that having a strong connection with someone who believed in them, helped them to succeed and to want to do better. Having that emotional balance of someone who cared while still being challenged in school helped the students rise to their highest potential.

        Feeling [supported by an adult figure](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ursus-proxy-6.ursus.maine.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=44b56df3-db69-4736-a657-c0fdb97ab895%40sessionmgr198&vid=2&hid=108) is only part of obtaining that balance in schools. Another part is having an outlet other than just class work and projects. Students need to feel engaged by joining a sport or a club where they can interact with peers in a low stress environment and take their mind off of their work load for a while. Joining athletics helps to inspire students to make more positive decisions in their life.

        Students are not the only ones who need to deal with balance in their lives though. Teachers struggle with balance, perhaps more than students. Teaching is one of the [highest stress level jobs](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ursus-proxy-6.ursus.maine.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b190dfe6-d45c-4bbf-b5e4-50a3560ace6b%40sessionmgr198&vid=1&hid=108) out there. It is for this reason that many teachers either leave the profession or retire early due to their claims of being burnt out. Teachers must not only look out the well-being of their students by not overloading them with work or giving them assignments which are beyond their capabilities, they must also look out for overburdening themselves. Teachers do not get to escape the school grounds at two everyday like the students get to. Many take on extra responsibilities in the school such as helping in a sport, club, or committee. Add that to meetings, grading, and lesson planning, teachers have a lot to do. While students can find that balance by having a strong connection in their lives and finding an outlet for their energy and frustration, teachers may not have that luxury. They must keep an eye on their own stress levels as well as those of their students, however, and find their own sort of outlets to escape the demands of their job. This way they avoid the burnout that so many teachers claim to suffer from.

Bouncing Back

While waking up you stub your toe on your dresser, then you end up having your mind wander making you take a wrong turn on your way to work. When you finally make it to your classroom you find you have an email telling you that a student in which you have spent the past two months personally tutoring after school has just committed suicide. You feel broken and overwhelmed, how can you possibly face your students when the bell rings? Whether there is a tragic incident, or our students have just driven us to the edge, educators need to know how to bounce back. Everyone is different, however there are five surefire ways to [build resilience](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx) so that you are able to bounce back. The ways to build resilience so that you can bounce back are; being able to see the silver lining, accepting change, have self confidence, self preservation, and expressing yourself through writing. 

**Silver Lining**

When thinking about finding the bright side of events, I think of Pollyanna. [Pollyanna](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054195/) was a young girl who no matter what life threw at her she found a bright side to it. [Finding the silver lining](http://www.liveyourlifewell.org/go/live-your-life-well/positive) is not the easiest thing to do, but it is a key thing to being able to go to school and take care of the needs of your classroom, and students. To some finding the silver lining comes naturally, but others need to work at it. If you find yourself wondering how this could ever possibly be a good thing then ask yourself these three questions; how has this helped me grow, what can I do now that I couldn’t do before, and am I proud of the way I handled this?

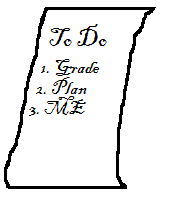
Sharon is a high school history teacher in Pine Bluff Arkansas. The day before her school experienced a shooting in which two teachers were killed and one student was placed in the hospital in critical condition. Even though it wasn’t part of her unit she felt the need to address the situation with her students so that everyone would be able to heal. She was able to sensitively address the situation, and give her students some examples of where they have happened in the past and some understanding of why they happen. After returning home she reflects on the situation and tries to find the silver lining. She finds that she is now equipped to teach her future students about the reasonings behind tragedies that happen through time and in the world today.

**Accepting Change**

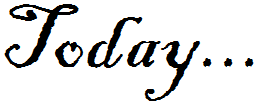
As we pass through time the world around us changes. Technology continues to advance, the number of standards increases, and the number of funds educators receive keeps decreasing. The only thing that never seems to change is our students need to learn from us. A key to bouncing back is to accept these changes and move on to helping students.

Sean is a middle school physical education teacher in Fitchburg Massachusetts. Very recently Sean was told that due to budget cuts his classes would be combined so that instead of having thirty students in his class at a time he would be having sixty. Sean didn’t understand how he would be able to handle sixty students running around. At first Sean tried to fight the decision and advocated that having that many students in the gymnasium for phys ed class would result in chaos. As the time went by he felt more and more frustrated, which interefered with how well he was handling his classes. A parent of one of his students made a meeting with him and told him that their child didn’t want to come to school because of his class. It made Sean think, and he decided that rather than hold all of his attention on fighting the expansion of his classes, that he would focus on ways to get all of his students involved. This decision helped him to feel less anxiety and positively affected his classroom.

**Self Preservation**

Being an educator leaves little time for anything else. Constant work without taking time for yourself will take a toll on your [body](http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/how-worrying-affects-your-body) and your [mind](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm). Prolonged stress can cause serious health problems that can negatively affect your classroom and the ability for you to teach to your students. Which is why it is so important for you to take care of yourself. Take the time to read a book, go for a walk, socialize, etc. Make sure that you take the time to do something that you love that will relax you. 

Eblin is a high school spanish teacher in Susanville California. Her favorite thing to do while on vacations is to read a book while laying out in the sun on her back porch. During the school year Eblin doesn’t find the time to relax or to read. She is too busy making plans for her lesson and grading. It is now January and a school break is not until April. Eblin has started to feel sharp pains in her stomach, the pain was so bad that she went to the hospital. The doctor told her that she has stomach ulcers, gave her a prescription and told her to relax. Eblin decided that she would set up a time in her schedule to read at least twice a week.

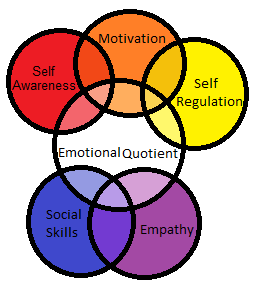
**Writing**

Diaries and Journals are meant to record events and feelings of an individual. A key strategy to bouncing back is writing things down. Once an event and feeling is written it is easier to let it go. Once it’s on paper it is as if the event or feeling has been lifted, and it’s okay to move on with the rest of the day.

Fred is a high school history teacher in Madison Maine. As a child he enjoyed reading the [Dear America books](http://www.scholastic.com/dearamerica/) (diaries written by children from historically important time periods). During his first year of teaching he decided that he would write down everything that happened during the class period and how he felt about it. The next year he was given classes that were specific to events and time periods. He spent the year researching and found no time to write. He quickly became overwhelmed and wondered why his first year was so much better. For an assignment he had his students journal about their lives to incorporate the Dear America books into his plans. He found that almost immediately his anxiety was dramatically smaller. Writing had allowed him to move on to focus on his students rather than to bottle up all of his emotions.

Emotional Quotient

“Emotional Intelligence is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.”([Wendy Lemke et al](https://www.crbard.com/uploadedFiles/CorpSite/Healthcare_Professionals/emotional-intelligence.pdf)) When asked most people either don’t know what emotional quotient is, or they have heard about it and have no idea how it affects them. An individual's emotional quotient is a big part of who they are. It’s present when you see that there is a person staring at you with knowing eyes. It’s the tiny voice inside of you telling you that you need to get your butt in gear and grade those papers. Everyone has an emotional intelligence just as everyone has an intelligence quotient. The strategy to find someone’s score is the same in both cases. You must take a test, immediately the test gives you your score. As tests usually go; the higher the score, the higher your intelligence. There are two categories and 5 sub categories that [make up an emotional quotient](http://disc-report.com/products/emotional-quotient/). The intrapersonal evaluation piece deals with self-emotions. Self-emotions refers to self-aware, self-regulatory, and self-motivational. The other piece, interpersonal, evaluates the perception a person has with others emotions. These perceptions help with social skills and empathy. After taking the [test](http://www.goodtherapy.org/tests/emotional-intelligence.html), you will receive a percentage to others scores for free, and a detailed report if you pay. Once you are aware of your emotional intelligence you are able to either make accommodations that will help to increase your performance in that area, or you can use your strengths to your advantage.



**Resources (In order):**

1. [http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx#](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx)

2.<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054195/>

3.<http://www.liveyourlifewell.org/go/live-your-life-well/positive>

4.<http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/how-worrying-affects-your-body>

5.<http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm>

6.<http://www.scholastic.com/dearamerica/>

7.<https://www.crbard.com/uploadedFiles/CorpSite/Healthcare_Professionals/emotional-intelligence.pdf>

8.<http://disc-report.com/products/emotional-quotient/>

9. [http://www.goodtherapy.org/tests/emotional-intelligence.html#](http://www.goodtherapy.org/tests/emotional-intelligence.html)